WHAT LIONS MEAN TO THE BLIND

Kendall, Wilmore

HV1788
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The Lion V. 9 N. 1. 1926 HV1788 K

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An Address Before Lions Convention by the REV. WILMORE KENDALL

LION President, Brothers and Comrades in the knightly fellowship of Lions International:

There is always a sense of anxiety which pervades such a gathering as this when it is announced that the next speaker on the program will be a minister, for clergymen are notorious for being sadly lacking in terminal facilities. But I am profoundly conscious that when time has once been lost, it can never be recovered..

So far as I know, there is only one case on record in which lost time was recovered. It happened down in Oklahoma. We had a very lovely girl down there in one of our small towns by the name of Miss Week. One day Miss Week became the wife of a handsome young fellow in her community by the name of Day, and the people in town were greatly distressed by the loss of time involved in changing a week into a day. But when the newspaper in that community came out, the editor gave the people comfort in words that ran like this:

"A week is lost, a day is gained,
But why should we complain?
Some time there may be Days enough
To make the Week again."

But, of course, there is no place else in all the world where lost time can be recovered except out in Oklahoma, so I shall not be prolix in my remarks to you this morning.

T IS not needful that anyone should appeal to the men of Lions International to become interested in work for the blind. Your splendid Juvenile Braille Magazine, your wide activities along unnumbered lines in behalf of those who are deprived of sight, has already proved that you are profoundly interested and deeply concerned with this task.

The one thing that might seem worth while is to pause for an instant on the threshold of a new year in the life of Lionism and to study the spirit in which we shall undertake the task that lies before us. After all, it often happens that the spirit in which we do a thing is just as important as the method by which we undertake it.

Most of you, I think, are acquainted with my good friend Fennale, the pastor of the Christian Church down at Paris, Texas. It seems that a few months ago Fennale and his wife came in one day from active visiting. They found on the front porch of their home a gift brought by one of their parishioners, a jar of sweet pickled peaches put up in brandy.

The next Sunday Fennale wanted to express his gratitude for this remembrance, and he began by saying: "My friends, we surely appreciated that wonderful jar of sweet pickled peaches preserved in brandy. Of course, we didn't care so much about the peaches, but we did appreciate the spirit in which they were sent."

MAY I say to you that the spirit which Lions International must approach its work for the blind must not be a spirit of charity and of pity. It is always dangerous to offer pity to any individual, and to the blind it is altogether inappropriate. You will remember that there are in the world's literature only four poems so vastly conceived and so magnificently executed that they have been called epic poems, and of those four, two were written by blind men, the "Iliad" of Homer, and the "Paradise Lost" of John Milton. Fawcett, who became the postmaster general of England, though entirely blind, was the man who originated the parcel post system among English-speaking people.

Most that we know of the life of the honey bee today was discovered by Huber, the blind Swiss scientist, who made his observations through the eyes of others, but who has given to us practically the entire round of knowledge which we possess today concerning the life that goes on within the beehive.

John B. Heerschoff, though totally blind, planned those wonderful yachts that again and again won the cup races between England and America.

THE great musical production which is being rendered at the Sesquicentennial Celebration in Philadelphia this month was composed by Adam Giebel, a blind musician who gave to us that always popular number, "Kentucky Babe."

When genius such as this has come to us out of the world of the blind, we dare not think of our sightless friends in terms of pity or compassion.

A few years ago I had occasion to make a journey on the train down through my neighboring State of Texas. I hadn't been riding along very far until a lady climbed abroad at one of the stations, a very corpulent lady. I didn't need to see to find that out, because without so much as a "by your leave" she immediately confiscated a little more than half of my seat. She hadn't been sitting with me long until she began to manifest a taste for worth-while subjects, for she set to asking me questions about myself.

"Young man," she said, "air you blind?" I had to confess that she had guessed right.

"Air you plumb blind?" "Absolutely," I told her.

"My, that must be terrible," she exclaimed. "I believe I would rather be crazy than blind, wouldn't you?"

"Well," I said, "sister, I think we ought both be very grateful to the Lord, for He seems to have given each of us in that matter just what we would prefer."

SAY, therefore, the spirit in which we approach the task must not be one of pity nor of charity. We must not give to our blind friends any sort of charitable benefaction. Let it be our task rather to swing ajar for them the door of opportunity, and to afford them the chance of making the most out of life at their own account. The blind must not be denied the opportunity of gaining that strength which comes to every man through struggle. The blind must not be deprived of the chance to attain that development which comes through battling with seemingly insuperable obstacles.

But here is the tragedy that has always confronted the blind. We give them training in our educational institutions, we bring them out fitted and qualified for some task in life, and then the public has said to them: "You cannot do my work. You are blind, and one without sight is simply incapable of tuning my piano, of making my broom, of serving as doctor or lawyer or minister in my community."

THERE is a drama written by Maxim Gorky called "Lodging for a Night." There was in the city of Moscow a basement where night after night a crowd of ne'er-do-wells came together to find brief lodging. In among them there came a marvelous genius for inspiration by the name of Lincoln.

He turned to the girl of the street, with her fallen, broken life, and he said, "you can be a shining diadem of purity again."

He turned to the gambler and said, "your life can become one of honesty, truth and usefulness."

He said to the drunkard, "you can shake off the shackles of your evil habit; you can become master in the domain of your own soul."

And one by one they turned from their evil ways and reached out their hands toward the new life which he had envisioned for them.

And then suddenly he vanished from their midst. The girl of the street, who had dreamed of purity, drifted back into a night that was darker than any she had previously known; and the gambler, who had thought of honesty, went back to the old life of ignoble shame; and the drunkard sank again into the slavery of his evil habit. And one and all they united to curse with vile imprecations the man who had taught them to dream, and then had not stayed to give the strength for fulfilling their dream.

IN your schools for the blind you have taught the sightless boys and girls to dream of success, to dream of becoming great musicians, useful piano tuners, helpful men in the professional and the commercial world; and then as they come to the threshold of manhood and womanhood the world has said to them, "no, we do not believe in you; we can't trust you to undertake our tasks."

Oh, my brothers of International Lionism, I appeal to you this morn-

How Deputy District Governors Work

OUT of his year of experience with deputy district governors, the head of the Kansas district, Donald Muir of Anthony, gave the governors his ideas of the best method of handling the various problems. The address was given before the meeting of district governors in the San Francisco Auditorium.

THE chairman asked me if I would give a little history of the way the deputy governors of Kansas work. Kansas is a state peculiarly situated, and has been for some time, due to the fact that we are primarily an agricultural state and we have been hard up—as hard up as could be, until this year, and for that reason our Officers' Association did not function, because we had no district fund whatever to pay their expenses.

So at the convention a year ago, at the time I was elected district governor, the outgoing district governor recommended the appointment of six deputies, which I appointed on the last day of the international convention. These deputies I appointed, of course, from a geographical standpoint, so they could visit the most clubs in their immediate vicinity.

We had a meeting at Wichita, Kansas, shortly after our return from Cedar Point, at which time we laid out a plan and a program to follow for the ensuing year. Among the things that we did first, I appointed the deputies from clubs which had sponsored clubs around them, largely among fellows who had the acquaintance in the various clubs. I told them that I wanted them to visit each and every club in their immediate district before I made my visit.

YOU will find that there is considerable criticism on the part of the individual members of clubs of Lions International, thinking that they are not cooperating with us as they should, and for various other reasons. I felt that these deputies, coming from the immediate vicinity of these clubs, would receive these criticisms perhaps more readily than the district governor himself. You have all found in your various visits to clubs that the district governor's visit is usually one for a little show, and everything they want to be as nice as possible while the governor is there.

I found that these deputies were a great help to me afterwards when I made my visits. The various members of the clubs had made their criticisms, and the deputy had abstracted these criticisms and sent them to me, so when I made the visits to these clubs, I would be able to talk to the individual members of the organizations that I visited rather than making some set speech for every club.

IN another way, several of the deputies—I will just give you a concrete example, because the time is short: Melvin Jones wired from Albuquerque, New Mexico, one morning that he could be in Hutchinson the following night, which gave us about thirty hours intervening. I immediately got in touch with my deputies, all six of them. I told the deputy at Hutchinson to arrange for a meeting there, and I had the other fellows call their clubs by long distance and tell them to send the president and secretary and as many members as they could from each club.

It happened that the night before we were having a joint meeting at Independence, Kansas, of four clubs, and there were 250 or so there, and I was booked for the main talk, and I went there. It is 269 miles from Independence to Hutchinson and I got into Hutchinson at 7:00 o'clock the next morning after an all-night ride—that is what Melvin was referring to at the banquet. The deputy at Independence arranged the meeting, the deputy at Salina arranged picnics and things like that where the various clubs could get together.

IN another particular instance, we had one club in Kansas that was rather weak, and it was this club that kept Kansas out of first place four consecutive times, until I finally sent my deputy there with instructions. The secretary of the club is a close personal friend of mine, and I told the deputy to tell the secretary—that was the only club that had kept us out of first place, 41 clubs had been reporting promptly—to tell the secretary that unless he got his reports in the next month, and kept it up for each and every month from then on as long as he was in office, the next time I came to that club to make my official visit, I was going to instruct the club to fire this secretary and elect another one while I was there.

The next month his report was the first one in, and he has been 100 per cent ever since, and we have been 100 per cent for 7 months consecutively.

It is those little things that the deputies can do that can be of great assistance to the district governor. In my district, with 42 clubs, a state 500 miles long and 300 miles wide, it is quite a job to get around and visit these clubs. I made a recommendation this last year that the deputies be increased to eight, so they could have joint meetings in the various localities for the district governor to meet with when he made his official visit, so it wouldn't be necessary for him to visit each and every individual club, thereby keeping the expense down.

I HAVE had six of the very best deputies this past year, men who have not only organized clubs, but have been executives in their own business. They didn't hesitate a minute at being appointed, in fact, they all took hold and gave me the very best cooperation throughout the entire year, and any success we may have had is due to the activities of these deputies. I could call them on the 'phone—six of them—in a little while, and they could write the various clubs in their own districts. They could write the fellows whom they knew personally, and whom I didn't know, and get work done that I couldn't do.

So I want to say, from the experience of the State of Kansas, and for the Seventeenth District, we are very proud of our deputy system, which has, in fact, superseded the Officers' Association. We have an Officers' Association, but the deputies have really superseded that.

We have had two meetings of the Officers' Association, but each time the deputies have been there. They have been very free, frank and open in their suggestions, and it has been a great help, and they will continue to be in our state. Every one of them is sold on Lionism, and for the next year, with the increase in the number of deputies, we are expecting an increase of twenty clubs in the State of Kansas. We increased only four this last year, due to the wheat failures the past few years, as I explained before; but we have the biggest wheat crop in Kansas this year that we have ever had, and with all the old clubs on very good footing, the incoming district governor and the deputies are going to have a mighty easy time. We already have lined up twenty cities that we intend to establish clubs in.

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ing, let us so relate our clubs to the schools for the blind that the boy and the girl who graduates from these schools shall immediately have a door swung open to them, a door of opportunity, a means for making life happy.

You remember that John Keats has told us of the thrill that came to him in the hour when he first looked into Chapman's translation of Homer; a kindred thrill has shot through the world of the blind since Lionism came to bring comrades and friends to those who walk in darkness.

"Then felt I as some watcher of the sky,
When a new planet swings into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when, with eagle eye,
He gazed on the Pacific; and all his men
Looked at each other with a mute surprise,
Silent upon a peak in Darien."

Lionism is the new star that has arisen upon the world of the blind, with its light of friendship and comradeship banishing darkness and bringing in the radiant dawn of the new morning of hope. May it be yourself in the new year of Lions International to go forward to bring the day that you have ushered in nearer to its zenith, closer to the hour of noontide's transcendent radiance.

Giving the Blind a Chance

THIS little talk on the work of Lions in behalf of the blind was by Harry C. Hartman of Seattle, the blind chairman of the International Committee on the Blind. He is a Lion, and is head of the school for the blind in Seattle, Wash.

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT, members of the Board of Directors, fellow Lions. I am going to be very brief today, because I believe that from the showing that the clubs throughout the country have made in the past year, the spirit of Lionism is permeating the work with blind people. You can get the detailed report of what the clubs throughout the country have done from the last issue of the Lions Magazine. For the further details you can write to the department of activities, so that it is not necessary for me to tire you this morning with the figures and facts about what we have done during the past year.

There are just one or two points which I believe we should always have before us, and which I wish to consider at this time. Our international president has just said that your chairman was trying to bring sunshine to blind people. Friends, how many of you have enjoyed the sunshine of California? Would you have enjoyed that sunshine if you had been out in a desert? What has given the sunshine its real warth? It has been the friendship, the hospitality of the Californians.

That is what is going to give the sunshine that Lionism gives to blind people the beneficial, health-giving warmth, the friendship and the love, the two things on which Lionism is founded. Give them an unselfish chance to serve. To do this, we must consider each blind person as an individual.

IF any of you were up here on the platform, you would see a lot of exposed domes; you would see a lot of bald heads. Now, I am sure that none of you would think that every baldheaded man was the same type of individual. And yet he lacks a physical attribute with which nature has endowed all of us. Now, it is the same with vision, only it is a question of degree. Take every blind person and give him a chance to show what he is capable of, and then help him to realize to the fullest extent his possibilities and capabilities.

There are some men in this world who are pre-eminent leaders of men. There are other men in this world who can only live from what is given them, a home in some institution.

There are just the same variations among blind people. We shouldn't believe that every blind person should have a college education; neither should we feel that every blind person should be in an institution. Lionism can bring to this work something that no other organization can bring, because we are founded on the platform of unselfish service.

IT is a very insignificant thing, possibly, to you, to think of placing one blind person a year in each district in some remunerative occupation, but, taking it over a period of fifteen or twenty years, if every district could place at least one blind person, in twenty years we will have placed almost as many people as are now remuneratively employed. Think of that.

The individual placement can be done by Lions because the employer will realize that the Lions are giving unselfish service. If the regular employee of an association or organization for the blind tries to do this work, the employer immediately says:

"Oh, yes, you are paid for that, that is why you have confidence and believe in blind people." But if you men give an hour, two hours, of your time to visit some of your factories, some of your stores, and help to place a blind person, the employer will say:

"If this man is so confident in the ability of this blind person that he is willing to give his valuable time, the least that I can do is give this blind person a chance."

LIKEWISE, much valuable service can be rendered by helping to dispose of the products manufactured by blind people. And here the same truth holds good. If you, who are unselfishly interested in this work, put forth an effort, you will get a much more unselfish response from the people with whom you work.

It would take weeks and months to go into the little details of the experience of blind people. I know that many of you listen to these talks and think it is all very fine, but what are we going to do? What special, particular thing can we do?

The first thing that can be done, and the most essential thing, is what one of the speakers said at the district governors' banquet. First, think about it. And after you have thought it over, then let your thoughts direct your actions.

You can't, by any stretch of the imagination, put yourself in a blind person's place. Don't try it. Just give sympathetic understanding, and that is all that can be expected. Closing your eyes for five minutes will never give you an adequate idea of what it means to live in complete darkness. Why? Because nature compensates for the lack of vision by developing other senses. There are tricks to every trade, and the blind person learns those tricks which seem marvelous to many sighted people, but which in reality are most simple and very fundamental.

I can only say that since Lionism has started this work, has brought to the work among blind people a new spirit, that Lionism must continue with this work, and in twenty or twenty-five years—that is not long—we will have done something of which not only we will be proud, but the whole world.

It is left to you men, hand-picked men in each community, to render the service that best fits that community. No program can be made definite, because of the different circumstances which we find in the different districts.

I APPRECIATE the support that the Lions Clubs throughout the country have given to the work this last year, and feel sure that if all of you will follow the International Magazine and get that marvelous bulletin that the department of activities has published on this work, a bulletin which workers for the blind throughout the country say is the most comprehensive and most concise piece of literature on the subject—think of that—we have been in this work three years, and this bulletin which our department of activities has issued has been called the most comprehensive and most concise statement of the promlem.

If we have done that in that short space of time, what can we do with the years ahead of us?

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WICHITA, KAN. — Placed daily papers for all inmates of tuberculosis sanitarium. Made survey for the blind of Wichita. Completed Lions Cabin for boys on a ten-acre camp site. Arranged outing for six thousand boys at Lions Cabin.

WILKINSBURG, PA. — Raising subscription for the Pennsylvania blind program.

WILKES-BARRE, PA. — Helped clean up on Community Welfare Federation annual drive.

WILMINGTON, N. C.—Entertained the district convention at Wrightsville Beach with the largest registration since the creation of the district.

WILLS POINT, TEXAS—Entertained the Bankers' Association of the county. One of the members of the club was elected Scout Master for the year and the club is back of the Scouts again this year.

WILSON, N. C.—Working in connection with the orthopedic clinic.

WINDSOR, ONT. — Attended the district convention in Ottawa and won the prize for the most representatives from greatest distance. Put on a play in Sandwich and Windsor to obtain funds for Mothers' Camp work. Profit $184.

YORK, PA.—Staged a luncheon in the interest of the blind at which all entertainers were blind. All members of the club were blind-folded during one course of the dinner in order to appreciate the work in which the club is engaged. Cooperated with five neighboring Lions Clubs in forming a league and arranging a series of ball games.

YREKA, CALIF.—Purchased Lion signs for the highway entrances to the city. Met with the Shasta Valley Chamber of Commerce in Montague in honor of Paul Clagstone, manager of the Western Division of the Chamber of Commerce of the U. S.

Selfishness—Good and Bad Kinds

(Concluded from page 22)

"self-expression." Now, in England, the more usual word is "self-realization."

I spend a great deal of my time in talking, in this country of yours, in praise of you as a nation and of your various qualities, so you will permit me once in a while to say something not quite so complimentary. It is not really a bad thing at all, but, on the whole, you in America prefer "self-expression" and we in England, on the whole, prefer "self-realization"; and I think this time we have rather the better of you.

In a great many things in education you are ahead of us—you are about 25 years ahead of us—and I am very anxious in addressing American audiences to get them to realize this; because it is very important to us in England. If we are following you, as in many ways we are, then it is very important that you should behave yourselves. I urge you, therefore, to do the best you can in education, if not for your own sake, then for ours.

Self-realization is different from self-expression in this way; that self-realization does not imply a ready-made self. In self-expression you have got the self given complete, ready for work, and all it has got to do is to express itself.

Now, as a matter of fact, you know that ready-made clothes are not quite so good as those made to order. The man may not be sure about this, but the women are quite sure. So with regard to self, it is the same thing. A self, ready-made, is not so good as a self in the making. Self-realization means, "here is a self, incomplete. What we have got to do is to bring out its highest potentialities." That is what your education is doing so well in America here.

When I say things like this to your American educationists, they are inclined to say, "after all, we mean in America exactly the same by self-expression as you mean in England by self-realization." And I think they are right. So, on the whole, fundamentally, we in England agree with you in America.

There are a great many more things that I might say on this subject, but, on the other hand, your time is very limited, and I must be as brief as possible. I want to show that people can be brief in public speaking.

There is one character in literature who is my favorite. I can't remember his name, but he occurs in the "Scene from Clerical Life," written by George Eliot. What I admire about him is that he was a learned man, a man who could hold his tongue in seven different languages. I want, then, to hold my tongue now in one language, and finish up merely with a quotation:

"Self-reference! Self-knowledge! Self-control! These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

I have said.

Club Officers Sentenced to a Year at Labor

Accepting office in a Lions Club is a serious matter in Salt Lake City. The installation ceremonies, after the recent election, impressed this on the officers. Each, as he arrived, was placed under arrest, led to an inner room, put into prison stripes and handcuffed.

When the luncheon hour arrived the prisoners were marched, with the prison lockstep, to the dining room where they were tortured with "The Prisoners' Song," and sentenced to a year at hard labor in Lionism, without pay, and with no allowance for good behavior.

The prisoners ate their luncheon through the bars, glad to get it under any circumstances.

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